



## Michigan National Organization for Women

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February 15, 2012

Honorable Jim Stamas, Chair  
House Government Operations Committee  
153 Capitol Building  
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Representative Stamas and Members of the House Government Operations Committee:

Michigan National Organization for Women **opposes House Resolution 185** that urges Congress to pass the misnamed *Respect for Rights of Conscience Act 2011* and to urge President Obama to reverse the Department of Health and Human Services regulation to require most health insurance plans to cover women's preventive services, including contraception, without charging a co-pay or deductible beginning in August 2012.

Today, nearly 99 percent of all women have used contraception at some point in their lives, but more than half of all women between the ages of 18 to 34 struggle to afford it. The expense and therefore inaccessibility of contraception is one of the leading causes of unintended pregnancies and abortion. An overwhelming majority of Americans (including those who are Catholic) support birth control coverage. The preventive services required in the Affordable Care Act include well women visits, domestic violence screening, and contraception. These were all were recommended to the Secretary of Health and Human Services by the independent Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Science.

We recognize that some religiously affiliated employers may object to providing contraceptive coverage to their employees. The President has announced that objecting non-profit religious employers will not have to provide contraceptive coverage or refer women to organizations that provide contraception. Religious organizations will not be required to subsidize the cost of contraception. There is no need for this resolution because objecting religious employers are exempt from the general policy.

If there is a religious liberty at stake in this matter, it is the religious liberty of employees of religious employers who may or may not share their employer's belief about contraception. A resolution urging the Congress and the President to protect the individual religious liberty of all employees would certainly be welcome and we would support it.

Sincerely,

Mary Pollock  
Legislative Vice President

*NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.*